

Serial No. 09/692,949

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Art Unit: 2153

In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for causing a network device to locally perform a data forwarding related service, wherein the network device comprises a data forwarding device, comprising the steps of:

receiving at the network device a document written in accordance with a markup language and a corresponding document definition, wherein the document describes a data forwarding related service;

parsing by the network device the received document in accordance with the corresponding document definition, wherein the parsing determines at least one parameter describing the data forwarding related service; and

executing the data forwarding related service on the network device in accordance with the parsed document.

2. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of executing includes the step of interfacing with hardware and software on the network device.

3. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the markup language is XML.

4. (original) A method according to claim 3, wherein the corresponding document definition is an XML DTD.

5. (original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

retrieving the corresponding document definition from a plurality of document definitions in accordance with an identifier in the received document.

6. (original) A method according to claim 5, wherein the plurality of document definitions are provided in a local storage of the network device.

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